



# SCHOOL BUS, INC.

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## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT"** **SEPTEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER**

### **Training Numbers are Coming In**

Dan has trained 49 TTT and 1144 other school bus drivers this summer. Thanks Dan for all of your hard work and traveling. If you still need additional training contact Harlow's Bus Sales at 1-605-345-4023.

### **Seat Belt Bills**

Seat belt bills were filed in 15 states, and enacted in one. As you know, Texas joined California as the second state to require lap/shoulder belts on new buses. The catch in Texas is that the law will not take effect unless the legislature provides full funding, which did not happen this year. (You may recall that Louisiana passed a seat belt bill several years ago, which still has not taken effect because no funding has been appropriated.) Bills are still active in four states: IL, MA, NC, and OH. In RI and TN, the bills will be carried over to the 2008 session. In the remaining states, AL, CT, KS, MS, MO, NH, SC, and WY, the sessions ended with no action on the seat belt bills.

### **Cell Phones**

In the wake of the NTSB recommendation regarding driver use of cell phones, there was a flurry of bills to prohibit drivers from using cell phones while operating a school bus except in emergencies. Kentucky and NC enacted new laws; similar bills are still active in PA, MI, and NY, but have died in IA and SC.

### **Illinois Governor Signs Anti-Privatization Bill**

While attending the National (NSTA) Convention this summer, one of the top issues for contractors right now is some states have already passed bills like the following article talks about. These bills are being pushed through by labor unions, which have spent millions of dollars for lobbyist in Washington.

On August 17, Governor Rod Blagojevich approved HB 1347, which limits the ability of school boards to outsource support services. Under the new law, districts are not allowed to enter into a contract at any time during collective bargaining agreement, and contracts can be for no more than two years. The contractor must match the wage and benefits package of the current employees, and offer positions to all qualified employees displaced by the contract. Both the district and the contractor must make cost projections for each expense category, which cannot be increased during the contract. The district faces burdensome notice and public disclosure requirements, as does the contractor.

The Illinois Association of School Boards has said that the new law "virtually ensures that either (1) a third party contract cannot be entered into because of the stringent criteria in the bill, or (2) a third party contract can only be established at a cost that is prohibitive to the school district because there can be no savings."

This bill was a priority of the teacher unions and the public employee unions in Illinois. Their success will likely spur affiliated unions to offer similar legislation in other states—and NSTA members must be prepared to fight those efforts in order to keep outsourcing a viable alternative for public schools.

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